

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-43 have been cancelled and new claims 44-78 have been added leaving claims 44-78 pending in the application. Claims 44-78 are supported by the Specification at, for example, Figure 4, pages 8-10, and Figure 5, pages 10-13, as well as pages 13-16. As such, claims 44-78 do not constitute new matter. The title has been amended for clerical reasons.

The previously pending claims had been rejected as obvious in view of Andrien, Jr et al. (U.S. 6,326,616), Wesley (U.S. patent 4,458,153), Kamo et al (U.S. patent 4,028,617) and Liang et al. (U.S. 5,081,397) in various combinations. New claims 44-78 are allowable in view of these cited references for at least the reason that new claims 44-78 recite limitations neither taught nor suggested by the cited references.

Claim 44 recites an ionization source that includes an electrically conductive conduit configured to provide at least one sample for ionization and an electrically conductive reference device positioned within the conduit.

The cited references neither teach nor suggest an electrically conductive reference device positioned within the conduit. For at least this reason new claim 44 is allowable. Claims 45-53 depend from claim 44 and are allowable for at least the reason stated above regarding claim 44.

Claim 54 recites an analytical instrument that includes an ionization source having a conduit configured to provide sample for ionization with the conduit including an electrically conductive discharge end. Claim 54 also recites an electrically conductive reference device positioned proximate the discharge end, whereupon discharge of the sample from the conduit, at least a portion of the sample is ionized by electrical arcing between the discharge end and the reference device. The cited references neither teach nor suggest electrical arcing between an electrically conductive

discharge end and a reference device. For at least this reason claim 54 is allowable in view of the cited references.

Claims 55-67 depend from claim 54 and are allowable for at least the reason stated above regarding claim 54.

Claim 68 recites a sample ionization method that includes causing electrical arcing between an electrically conductive sample conduit and a reference device proximate the discharge end of the sample conduit at a time when a sample arrives at a point proximate the discharge end and the reference device to ionize at least a portion of the sample to produce analyte ions. The cited references neither teach nor suggest electrical arcing between an electrically conductive sample conduit and a reference device proximate the discharge end to ionize a sample to produce analyte ions. For at least this reason claim 68 is allowable in view of the cited references.

Claims 69-78 depend from claim 68 and are allowable for at least the reason stated above regarding claim 68.

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Claims 44-78 are believed to be in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request allowance of these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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